NATO-RUSSIA MEETING IN BAKU: AZERBAIJAN AS LINK BETWEEN MOSCOW, WEST

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By Elmira Tariverdiyeva – Trend

Today the most important meeting will be held between General Petr Pavel, chairman of the NATO Military Committee and General Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces and first deputy minister of defense.

It is impossible to overestimate the significance of this event, since this is the first meeting since NATO made a decision to freeze relations with Russia. The meeting will be held in Azerbaijans capital Baku, which has already become a landmark; in February 2017, Gerasimov met here with General Joseph Francis Dunford, chairman of the Joint Committee of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The February meeting once again demonstrated that Azerbaijan is a geopolitical link between Russia and the United States, having strategic relations with both countries.

Baku, as a platform for Russias negotiations with Western partners, is the most obvious choice. Moreover, the country has deservedly won the spot as one of the most important geopolitical centers of the region. Azerbaijan is a reliable and long-standing partner of NATO and a strategic partner of Russia, and Moscow trusts it.

All this contributes to the fact that both Russia and the West trust Azerbaijan as the host country and consider it the most successful platform for important negotiations. The fact that the information about this meeting appeared in the Russian media on the day of holding the meeting, became one of the proofs of the highest professionalism of the host party.

However, in February, the news of Gerasimovs meeting with Dunford leaked to the US media, but

not to the Azerbaijani one.

The subject of the negotiations between Gerasimov and Pavel is likely to be related to a number of topical issues of military cooperation, which today determines the situation in the whole region. One of the main issues today is the establishment of direct and consistent contacts between Moscow and NATO in order to prevent the emergence of potential miscalculations and unite against the only real enemy - global terrorism.

However, if one ignores the quite rich agenda of the relations between the two world powers, and returns to the venue of the meeting, it becomes obvious that this meeting has become yet another message demonstrating the true position Baku has on the international arena.

Baku has long established itself as a NATO partner, which can and should be trusted. Azerbaijan, remaining an independent country that has good relations with almost all its neighbors, plays an important role in the transit of cargo for coalition troops in Afghanistan.

Big percentage of supplies for the NATO coalition goes through Azerbaijan, which is extremely important, because today transit through the territory of Russia is impossible.

Being a key component of the Northern Distribution Network of NATO, Azerbaijan provides a secure route for 40 percent of NATO-supported International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan is an active participant in international anti-terrorism efforts. Azerbaijan and the US work together to counter nuclear proliferation and drug trafficking, as well as to ensure security in the Caspian Sea region and beyond.

Kaynak/Source: